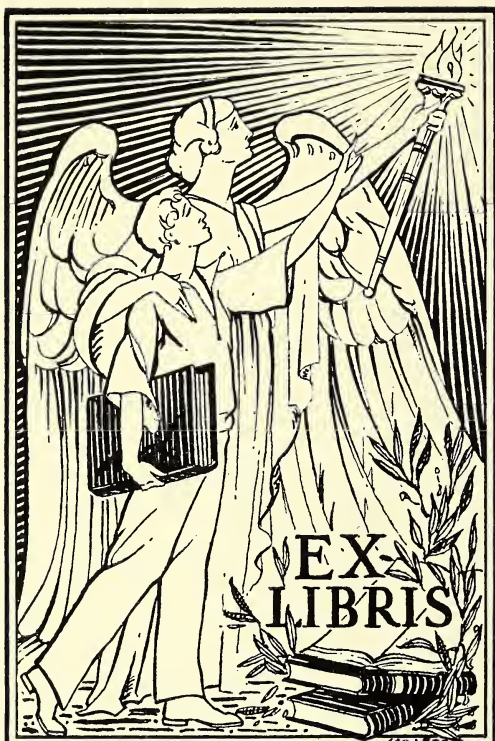


CHILDREN SHOULD GO TO SCHOOL.

Nettie M.G. Prange.

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AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

Children Should Go To School

THE success attained by the ORLANDO COURSE IN BRAILLE has brought to us requests for a wide range of service. Those that particularly appeal to my sympathy come from the parents of healthy blind or nearly blind children who feel that their children must never leave the sheltering care of home. This attitude, though natural, is tragic. No child can be given the full benefits of education without contact with his fellows—but the child with defective vision needs this contact and its resulting development of independent action more than any other. Besides this almost automatic gain, there is the skilled training in a specialized school which teaches ways to meet every day requirements with an ease and accuracy that to the uninitiated seems incredible. This has a great material benefit in allowing personal independence, but the effect on the morale is of even greater importance. It is not at all what we can do for the blind that alleviates their situation, but it is what we can train them to do for themselves. The child that is started right in this respect can live a full, useful, and happy life, but the one surrounded with an atmosphere tainted with his helplessness develops into a self-pitying querulous individual that eventually makes everyone around him unhappy.

There is, of course, the occasional

case of a child with defective vision who has other physical troubles that make it impossible to send him to school. In such case his family should in every way urge a personal independence as far as his condition allows. He can be trained to do almost everything that a seeing child could do under the same circumstances. He should



Nettie M. G. Prange

be taught to read Braille and expected to do his own reading and studying. The Talking Book Machine is a great help but can no more take the place of Braille to the blind than library books can take the place of school books, current magazines, and personal notations for the seeing. They are a valuable supplement to, but not a substitute for, the advantages of personal

reading and writing.

There is some inherent *twist* in our natural thinking that prevents even the most intelligent and clearest minded people from using their usual powers for reasoning when first brought in contact with the blind and their problems. It is not at all unusual for people who have read that the ORLANDO COURSE teaches a person to read Braille by spending two hours daily for six weeks, to send us names for enrollment to the course with no consideration that to read in Braille as well as printing, one must know language—must know words, their meaning, and how to spell them—Braille being only

a type.

Braille is so cleverly and systematically built up that it is far more easily learned than the unrelated lines forming our ink types, but it requires so much time and attention to teach language, it is seldom, indeed, that sufficient local help can be given to make the teaching of children by mail a success. The ORLANDO COURSE is fitted to adults who already know how to read the ordinary newspaper. When the necessary local help is available for those with less language and reading skill, we send special lessons with instructions.

Our lessons in foreign Brailles are also misunderstood. We have complete courses in Spanish, Italian, French, German, and Swedish Brailles, and can give necessary help to Norwegians and Danes, but the pupil must know how to read in the language he selects—we teach only the Braille. These lessons are for our foreign-born blind who cannot read English or who have a longing to read their Bibles in the mother-tongue.

We are eager to reach out a helping hand to as many as possible and can make the mastery of Braille not only simple but fascinating to one ready to do his part. We have no magic, however, by which we can teach those who have no interest in learning. We therefore particularly request that only really promising prospects be sent to us, because useless enrolments are an unwarranted drain upon our resources of strength and money. Our work is supported solely by the ORLANDO LIONS CLUB of Florida—the men pay the actual expense—and the writer, an Honorary Member, does the teaching as a thank offering for prolonged partial sight and in full realization through personal experience of what Braille

can mean to the enfeebled aged. We have nothing to sell and never solicit donations.

MRS. N. M. G. PRANGE, *Supervisor,
Lion Braille Department,
Orlando, Florida.*

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**Brief Biography of Author of
"Children Should Go To School"**

• NETTIE MAY GIFFORD PRANGE was born in Vermont where she was educated in the public academy and boarding school. Her life work, prior to a serious loss of vision was begun in Florida where she became a business executive.

When her sight began to fail in 1923, due to glaucoma, Mrs. Prange, feeling she had accumulated sufficient of this world's goods to retire and live in comfort, resigned her position. She soon became partially blind, however, and gained only temporary relief through an operation. At the age of sixty, she had lost the sight of her right eye, and the doctors told her that she would eventually lose the sight of the other. She decided to study Braille while she still had partial sight, but she could find no one interested in teaching it to a woman of her age, even with her education, background, and willingness to pay liberally for help. Finally, she obtained a Latimer book and began studying. She learned Braille by eye in less than a week.

After having learned Braille herself, Mrs. Prange began teaching it to other blind people. Later a Mrs. M. T. Cassidy requested instruction. Because there was no other way to reach her, Mrs. Prange reduced her lessons to writing and took a chance on Mrs. Cassidy being able to master them through a correspondence course. In six weeks Mrs. Cassidy was reading Braille, and the mail course had be-

come a success. Mrs. Prange stood the expense of having these lessons printed for the use of others who wished to learn by correspondence, but when the depression struck in 1929, it became impossible for her to continue to bear the expense alone.

At about this time, the Lions Club of Orlando became interested in her work and soon that organization took up the distribution of her lessons, first on a state-wide basis and then on a national. Today that club is sending Mrs. Prange's lessons throughout the world.

Mrs. Prange has gained unusual satisfaction in her work. When quizzed about her generous contribution of time and money to the cause of the blind, in spite of her own handicap, she expressed this beautiful thought, "My affliction has brought me the happiest evening of life one ever experienced." In these respects her life reminds one of that of the late "Daddy" Edgar F. Allen, who after his supposed retirement found the time and means to build a world-wide sentiment and organization in behalf of crippled children.

Hearing Surveys

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communities were urged to employ a teacher for joint use. Smaller communities were urged to select teachers to study lip reading in summer courses in order to give local aid to the needy pupils. As a result of the traveling clinic's surveys recommendations are being adopted. Indianapolis has set the pace by employing a second full-time lip reading teacher, one full-time tester, and by purchasing a pitch audiometer to supplement their group audiometer. It has also engaged a director of speech improvement in accordance with the

clinic's suggestion. Kokomo, Bloomington, and Peru have purchased group and pitch audiometers. Other purchases are contemplated. Kokomo and Bloomington have also engaged lip reading teachers. So many children needing lip reading have been discovered that other teachers will soon be appointed. Because of limited budgets, some schools are contemplating employment of a combination teacher of lip reading, speech correction, and remedial reading. In fact this type of teacher will soon be in greater demand than the supply at present can offer.

The procedures outlined above indicate what a wealth of information may be obtained from a case study of each child, which permits a more adequate, appropriate recommendation for school room readjustment. It reveals the great dangers to normal development when children are cut off from the realities of their environment. If they are not discovered early, it is difficult to change the warped personalities. As important as these discoveries are, with their subsequent recommendations, it is doubtful that every child will receive all the advantages to which he is entitled. School appropriations are inadequate, conservatism has a strong hold, and parental cooperation may not be forthcoming. But the admirable manner in which some cities throughout the nation are training their hard-hearing and the gradual change of heart of many educators presents a hopeful picture. The rapidly spreading program of hearing conservation is placing the problem of the hearing-handicapped child forcefully before the country where it will not be forgotten. The hard-hearing child is receiving and must receive all the special considerations that are being extended to other exceptional children.

Brief Notes

Pennsylvania Chooses Experimental Areas

Regional supervision of special education in Pennsylvania will be given a tryout this year in three diversified rural areas of the state. One of the three regions is Luzerne County, with some 1,700 teachers, which represents a typical metropolitan area where population is relatively concentrated. Another comprises Blair, Huntingdon, and Mifflin Counties which represent a section with population distributed rather thinly over a wide area. The third region includes Erie, Crawford, and Warren Counties, which typify an intermediate type of population, with both thickly populated and sparsely settled areas. It is expected that the supervision of special education in these three regions during the next year will present practically every type of problem in the education of exceptional children that would be met in any part of Pennsylvania.

The work will be carried on by county supervisors of special education who will serve at the level of assistant county superintendents, and will be selected and appointed by the local county superintendents and county boards concerned. The basic salaries and traveling expenses, however, will be paid by the state.

In describing the duties of these county supervisors of special education, Dr. T. Ernest Newland, chief of the Division of Special Education, states that at least two years advanced work in clinical and educational psychology, in addition to their certification as teachers in Pennsylvania, will be required. Their primary concern will be with the educational adjust-

ments of the nine types of exceptional children now included in the special education program—the tall, the mentally superior, mentally retarded, partially seeing, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, speech defective, physically handicapped, and the crippled. These supervisors will also be available to juvenile court judges, in their respective areas, who seek information concerning the educability and social adjustment of any children in schools under the jurisdiction of the county superintendent of schools.

Delaware Extends Legislation

At the last session of the Delaware legislature a bill was enacted requiring the reporting to the State Board of Education of "every child within a school district between the ages of six and sixteen years, who is seriously retarded in his or her school work." Any child between the ages of six and sixteen who, because of apparent physical or mental handicap is not properly educated or trained, thereafter the State Board of Education with the aid of cooperating agencies, shall examine such child and report whether said child is a fit subject for special education and training. It shall be the duty of the State Board of Education to provide and maintain under appropriate regulations special classes or special facilities whenever possible to meet the needs of all children recommended for special treatment who come from any geographical section within the State that can be served by such special facilities." No special appropriation, however, was made to carry out the provisions of the law.

During the past year Dr. J. J. Wallin, director of special education and mental hygiene, has conducted a state-wide special education survey.

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